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Supreme Leader of IEA highlights vital role of justice in Islamic governance

KABUL: Shaikh Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, highlighted the vital role of justice in Islamic governance, Arg said in a statement the other day.

Addressing a three-day reformative and educational seminar for judicial officials in Kandahar, Shaikh Mullah Hebatullah Akhundzada expressed appreciation for the dedicated services of all judicial personnel and emphasized the noble status and critical responsibility of judges.

Drawing from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the Supreme Leader explained the wisdom of Qazaa (judicial rulings), the honor associated with it, and its impact on both individual and societal levels.

He said that the Prophet Muohammad (peace be upon him) personally engaged in judicial duties, issuing rulings, clarifying the Shariah, enforcing decisions, and implementing the Hudood (Islamic legal punishments).

"The judiciary is a cornerstone of an Islamic system. Through the courts, the lives, wealth, and honor of the people are protected. Sitting for one hour with the intention of upholding justice can bring the reward of 60 to 70 years of worship, as mentioned in different narrations," the IEA Supreme Leader said as quoted by the statement.

He further noted that justice eradicates corruption, eliminates chaos, and upholds peace, stressing that the strength of Islamic rule is deeply tied to the strength of its judiciary.

Without proper judicial systems, tyranny flourishes unchecked, the voice of the oppressed is silenced, and immorality spreads across society, he warned, instructing all officials to maintain sincerity, integrity, and commitment to Allah's laws in discharging their responsibilities, emphasizing that justice is both an act of worship and a duty to the Ummah. The seminar concluded with renewed determination among the judiciary to implement Islamic justice in its purest form, ensuring stability, fairness, and the protection of people's rights throughout the country. **The Kabul Times**

Russia officially recognizes Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan

KABUL: Dmitry Zhirnov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation in Kabul, met with Mawlavi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Country's foreign Minister, to deliver Russia's official recognition of the IEA government, the ministry said in a statement the other day.

During the meeting, Ambassador Zhirnov emphasized the importance of this decision, describing it as a "historic step" toward strengthening bilateral relations between Russia and Afghanistan.

He noted that Moscow views this move as a gateway to broader cooperation in regional stability, economic engagement, and political dialogue, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, Muttaqi welcomed the recognition, calling it "a new chapter in positive relations, mutual respect, and constructive engagement" between the two nations.

He stated that Russia's realistic approach would be remembered as a turning point in Afghan-Russian history.

The acting foreign minister also expressed hope that this decision would serve as an example for other nations, encouraging wider diplomatic recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

"With this step, mutual cooperation in trade, infrastructure, security, and diplomacy would see substantial growth," the statement quoted him as saying.

The Kabul Times

Afghan, Turkmen officials meet on ECO summit sideline

KABUL: Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate for Economic Affairs, met with Rashid Meredov, Deputy PM and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, discussing the strengthening of bilateral economic cooperation, Beradar's office said in a statement the other day.

Speaking at the meeting on the sidelines of the ECO Summit in the city of Khankendi of Azerbaijan, Beradar Akhund emphasized the importance of enhancing diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, particularly through the appointment of an Ambassador in Ashgabat and a Consul General in Mary, according to the statement.

He noted that one of the major joint economic initiatives between Kabul and Ashgabat is the TAPI project, which has paved the way for expanding cooperation not only between the two countries but also across the broader region.

The deputy PM further stated that the Islamic Emirate has finalized the route map for the TAPI project and is making every effort to ensure the implementation of the project in Afghanistan proceeds without any delays or obstacles.

Mullah Beradar also stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral trade between Kabul and Ashgabat by opening chambers of commerce and banking branches in both capitals and facilitating the issuance of visas to Afghan traders.

He added that joint efforts between the two countries in areas such as mining, transport, transit, services, regional infrastructure, and fundamental project management would play an effective role in ensuring economic stability, development, and prosperity in both nations.

Referring to Turkmenistan's experience and progress in agriculture, the Deputy PM requested Turkmenistan to share its expertise in this field with Afghanistan, and to have technical teams from both countries work collaboratively.

Meanwhile, Rashid Meredov reaffirmed Turkmenistan's longstanding interest in maintaining good and friendly relations with Afghanistan.

He stated, "Our President has consistently supported Afghanistan on international platforms and has commended the progress achieved there."

Meredov said Turkmenistan is ready to expand its cooperation with Afghanistan beyond political ties, particularly in the areas of economic and trade relations.

The Kabul Times

Mujahid's official statement concerning case of Afghan citizen Mahmood Shah Habibi

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan categorically rejects the allegations made by the United States of America, which accuse the General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) of Afghanistan of involvement in the disappearance of an Afghan citizen named Mahmood Shah Habibi.

Relevant institutions of the Islamic Emirate have undertaken investigations across all concerned departments in response to a petition submitted by Mr. Habibi's family. No evidence has been uncovered indicating that he has been detained by any entity affiliated with the Islamic Emirate.

All institutions of the Islamic Emirate, including the General Directorate of Intelligence, remain committed to upholding the legitimate rights of detainees in accordance with the Sharia-based laws approved by His Highness, Amir al-Mu'minin (may Allah protect him).

These institutions are also obligated to refer any detained individual to the judicial authorities within the legally prescribed timeframe.

As a legitimate governing authority, the Islamic Emirate has no reason to detain or conceal any individual merely suspected of criminal activity.

Historically, citizens of several countries, including the United States, who were apprehended for violations of Afghanistan's enforced laws, maintained regular contact with their families, and judicial and legal proceedings related to their cases were conducted with transparency.

Zabihullah Mujahid

Shaheen encourages world states to follow Russia in recognizing Islamic Emirate

KABUL: Mohammad Suhail Shaheen, the Islamic Emirate's ambassador in Qatar, has expressed optimism that other countries may follow Russia's lead in recognizing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

In an interview with Russia's state news agency RIA Novosti, Shaheen stated that Russia's decision had created "opportunities for joint work" and urged other nations to consider similar recognition.

This interview coincided with Russia's formal recognition of the Islamic Emirate, and acceptance of credentials from Afghanistan's newly appointed ambassador to Moscow and the raising of the Islamic Emirate's flag over the Afghan embassy.

The Kabul Times

Preliminary survey completed for Tanda Ghark water reservoir dam in Paktia

GARDEZ: The Department of Water and Energy of Paktia said in a statement on Friday that it has successfully completed the preliminary survey for the construction of the Tanda Ghark water reservoir dam in Ahmadabad district of the province.

This strategic project aims to transform agricultural productivity, improve groundwater levels, and contribute to sustainable development in the province, the statement said.

Once completed, the dam will irrigate 1,200 hectares of agricultural land, revitalizing the local farming economy, enhancing food security, and strengthening the livelihoods of thousands of families who depend on agriculture as their primary source of income.

The initial survey included the collection of critical technical data in various domains such as topography, hydrology, geology, environmental impact, agriculture, and social factors, forming the foundation for the final design and feasibility study of the dam, the statement added.

The Kabul Times

Afghanistan, China discuss diplomatic relations

KABUL: Mawlavi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate, in a meeting with Zhao Chao, the Deputy Secretary-General of China's Xinjiang province, discussed bilateral political relations, the ministry said in a statement the other day.

The meeting also focused on fostering cooperation grounded in mutual confidence and evaluating and broadening economic, transit, and trade prospects, the statement said.

Speaking at the meeting, Muttaqi underscored the importance of enhancing collaboration between the two nations.

The Chinese side commended Afghanistan's security status and its strategic position for regional connectivity, indicating a willingness to explore collaborative initiatives and avenues for enhancing economic relations between Xinjiang and Afghanistan.

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Food for thought

Today's generation guarantees our bright future

Russia's recognition of Islamic Emirate great political achievement

After a long discussion and scrutiny, the Russian Federation finally found that the Islamic Emirate deserves recognition. So, it stepped up becoming the first country recognizing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

July 4 witnessed another great political victory of the incumbent Islamic system after welcoming dozens of the country's diplomatic missions and ambassadors from many of the world's nations.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan ultimately managed to obtain recognition from one of the world's superpowers, which has been in good interaction with Afghanistan over the last four years since the resumption of power by the Islamic Emirate.

A few hours after accepting the credentials of a new ambassador of Afghanistan as part of an ongoing drive to build friendly relations with the country's Islamic system, Russia announced that it has officially recognized the new Afghanistan system as the Islamic Emirate.

"We believe that the act of official recognition of the government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will give impetus to the development of productive bilateral cooperation between our countries in various fields," the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Thursday (July 3.)

The country's Foreign Minister Mawlavi Amir Khan Muttaqi said in a video of a meeting with Dmitry Zhirnov, the Russian ambassador to Kabul, posted on X (formerly known as Twitter) that the move makes Russia the first country in the world to recognise the Islamic Emirate as a (legitimate government) adding, "this brave decision will be an example for others...now that the process of recognition has started, Russia was ahead of everyone." Although the move by Russia may cause inconvenience to some malicious countries, the Islamic Emirate ultimately found its highest position among the world's nations, particularly after certain countries acknowledged that Afghanistan deserved recognition as it has full control of the country and is containing internal and foreign militants, besides ensuring nationwide security.

So, other countries should understand the facts and realities of the country and follow Russia in recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

Restrictions on some Islamic Emirate members should be lifted, billions of Afghanistan's assets should be unfrozen, and the war-affected Afghans should be helped to live in peace.

Russia's recognition of Islamic Emirate; a significant step towards positive, official relations

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has announced that Russia has become the first country to officially recognize its rule, calling it a brave decision and step towards starting positive relations between the two countries.

The announcement was made after Afghanistan's Foreign Minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, met with Russia's ambassador to Afghanistan, Dmitry Zhirnov, in Kabul on Thursday.

"This brave decision will be an example for others. Now that the process of official recognition has started, Russia was ahead of everyone," Muttaqi said in a video of the meeting on X.

"Russia is the first country which has officially recognized the Islamic Emirate," the Islamic Emirate's foreign ministry spokesman Zia Ahmad Takal told media the other day.

In the video clip, Muttaqi said, "it was a new phase of positive relations, mutual respect, and constructive engagement", the foreign ministry posted on X.

In the meantime, Russia's foreign ministry said on Telegram: "We believe that the act of official recognition of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will boost the development of productive bilateral cooperation between our countries in several areas."

It highlighted potential commercial and economic cooperation in energy, transportation, agriculture and infrastructure, adding that Moscow hoped to continue helping Kabul reinforce regional security and fight against the threats of terrorism and drug-trafficking.

Russia has taken recent steps to normalize relations with the Islamic Emirate authorities and accept the IEA's ambassador in Moscow.

In July 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the Islamic Emirate allies in the fight against terrorism. Russia was the first country to open a business representative office in Kabul after the IEA takeover, and has announced plans to use Afghanistan as a transit hub for gas heading to Southeast Asia.

Multiple states, including China, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Iran, and other regional countries have accepted the Islamic Emirate ambassadors in their capitals, but have not officially recognized the Islamic Emirate since they took over the country in mid-August 2021. There has been limited but growing engagement with the Islamic Emirate authorities, particularly from regional neighbours, but also major global players China and Russia.

With the Russia becoming the first country to recognize the Islamic Emirate rule in Afghanistan, China has reacted and welcomed the decision by Russia.

"As a traditional friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, the Chinese side has always believed that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said.

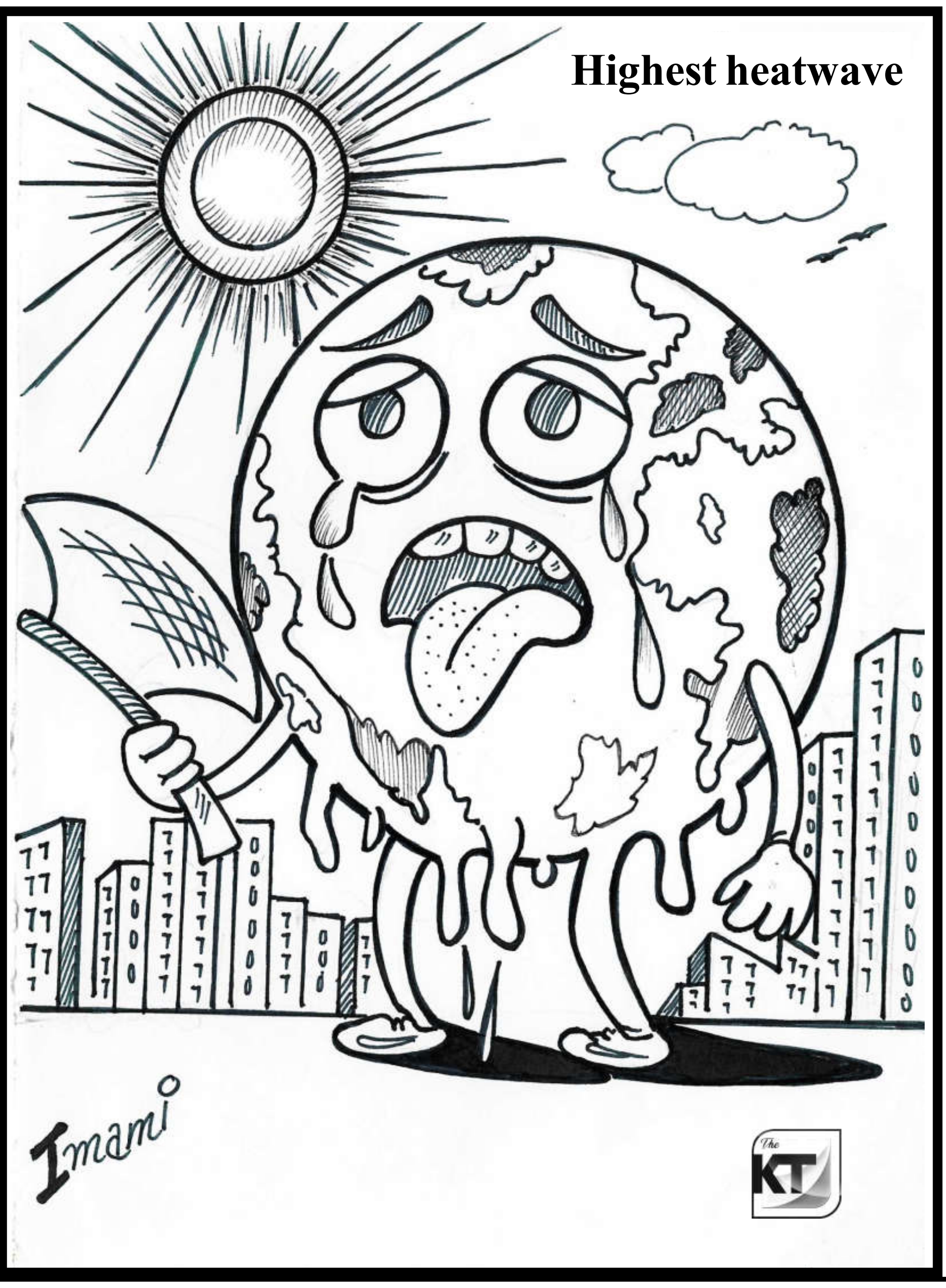
Meanwhile, Senior Islamic Emirate member Anas Haqqani has also welcomed Russia's decision on recognition of the Islamic Emirate, saying that official engagement with the Islamic Emirate is an acknowledgement of undeniable reality. He further said that the policy of pressure by some countries would not work, asking for positive engagement with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

It is worth mentioning that the people of Afghanistan have also repeatedly asked the world countries for positive engagement with the Islamic Emirate.

They welcome the brave decision of Russia's recognition of the Islamic Emirate and called it a positive steps towards relations between the two countries.

The Russia's recognition will accelerate the process of official recognition of the Islamic Emirate.

There are hopes that more countries will take similar brave decision on the IEA's recognition in coming days. **Sayed Sharif**



Iran–Israel war: From rhetorical battles to open confrontation

Part V

In this final part of the series, we aim to explore the reality of a war that began but did not end.

A war in which both sides entered the battlefield with fierce determination and paid the price.

Although the consequences of this war were severe for the occupying regime of Israel, U.S. intervention led both parties to agree to a ceasefire. Whether this ceasefire marks the end of the war or merely the beginning of another round of conflict remains to be seen—it is too early to judge.

First, it must be said that the recent war between Iran and Israel, though not a full-scale war in appearance, was for the first time a direct and open military confrontation between the two countries. Previously, confrontations were mostly through proxy wars or covert operations, but this time, both sides openly engaged in military action. Eventually, under pressure from regional countries and global powers, a temporary ceasefire was reached.

However, this ceasefire does not signify the end of the war—it seems more like a brief pause in the ongoing conflict. Both sides remain on high alert, and the situation appears extremely unstable.

For Iran, this war was an opportunity to prove that its actions go beyond rhetoric and that it possesses the capability to retaliate and attack if necessary. Iran's strikes demonstrated its ability to damage Israeli interests in the region and activate new fronts.

This bolstered Iran's standing among resistance groups and proved its strategy is not limited to words.

On the other hand, Israel, through its heavy attacks on Iranian targets in Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere, attempted to show that it still maintains military superiority and will not back down in the face of threats.

These confrontations were not without cost. Involved countries like Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq suffered infrastructure damage. Inside Israel, widespread fear and anxiety led to immense psychological stress among the population. In Iran, some analysts criticized the lack of coordination among resistance fronts and emphasized the need for better preparedness in the future.

As a result, both countries are now in a phase of review and reassessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses. The current ceasefire is not the outcome of a genuine peace agreement but rather a response to fears of war escalation. Neither side has retreated or altered its policies.

Therefore, even a small incident could reignite hostilities. Some analysts believe this is merely a short pause in the middle of a prolonged war.

From the perspective of regional countries, this war served as a serious alarm. Nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, and even Turkey closely monitored developments with deep concern.

Had the war escalated, the entire region would have undoubtedly plunged into instability.

This fear prompted several countries to step in as mediators to quickly establish a ceasefire. Although many Arab states maintain official relations with Israel, they recognize that a full-scale war with Iran could also threaten their own internal security.

On the other hand, many people in these countries sympathize with Iran and the axis of resistance, which could place their governments under significant social pressure.

At the international level, the recent conflict forced the United States, the European Union, Russia, and China to reconsider their Middle East strategies. See P4

Islamic Emirate at the frontline of war on insurgency

The United Kingdom has recetly acknowledged that the Islamic Emirate forces have managed to contain the militants affiliated with the so-called Islamic State's Khurasan Province (IS-KP) in Afghanistan.

The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, speaking at a conference in Islamabad, added that IS-KP has not been entirely eradicated and still retains the capacity to launch attacks both inside and beyond Afghanistan's borders.

Matt Cannell, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, stated: "Since 2022, I think the Taliban pressure has addressed some of that. But what we've seen is a dispersal rather than eradication of IS-KP. They have obviously regrouped and are now promoting attacks in neighbors in Afghanistan and across the border as well."

This British diplomat further expressed concern about ISIS activity in the region and stressed the need for joint efforts and regional coordination in combating terrorism.

Cannell added: "We understand how Taliban (the Islamic Emirate) pressure has continued to affect IS-KP and sharing information to continue to disrupt future activity. So, sharing insights with our partners and our partnerships is essential." But, the fact is that the Islamic Emirate has used all its power to completely suppress, eliminate and root out all kinds of militants in the country and the forces of the country is at the frontline of war on insurgency both across the country and at regional level.

The Islamic Emirate has frequently said that militants, including IS-KP militants, have been defeated in Afghanistan and are no longer operational.

In a separate development, the British chargé d'affaires to Afghanistan told Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, acting minister for refugees and repatriation, that a plan has been prepared at the United Nations for Afghanistan, which will soon be shared with the Islamic Emirate.

The plan emphasizes strengthening ties with Afghanistan and ensuring national security.

Earlier, the Ministry of Interior assured that ISIS has been completely suppressed in Afghanistan and has no physical presence in the country.

The ministry with its spokesperson Abdul Matin Qani said that according to their information, IS-KP militants' attacks were mostly planned outside Afghanistan's borders in neighboring countries.

Qani said the Islamic Emirate is working to neutralize the anti-security elements' cross-border attacks as well.

Actually, IS-KP insurgents do not exist in Afghanistan at all and have reached zero. We completely reject their presence. Unfortunately, the recent incidents we have witnessed have roots beyond our borders. There is evidence and documents proving they are organized from beyond the country. He said they were working to establish relations with those countries to eliminate insurgency beyond the borders as well.

The spokesperson once again pledged that Afghanistan's soil will not be used against other countries and some countries' concerns, and the concerns of the United Nations Security Council over Afghanistan's security situation are not in place.

Inam Hashemi

From the impact of past wars to unemployment: Uruzgan youth demand job opportunities

Following decades of war in Afghanistan, although the security situation in the country has significantly improved, the issues of unemployment, economic hardship, and lack of job opportunities remain a major concern for millions of Afghans.

The wars not only inflicted physical damage but also destroyed the country's foundational economy, eliminated educational opportunities, and forced thousands of young people either into migration abroad or into despair.

While the entire country has been freed from war and people have begun to breathe a sigh of relief since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, the lack of employment opportunities, widespread poverty, and limited economic prospects continue to be a major headache for ordinary people—especially the youth.

Like many other provinces, the youth living in Uruzgan province complain about the shortage of job opportunities and say they are facing unemployment.

A local resident of the province, Sher Agha, who goes to the city nearly every day in search of work, says there are very few days when he finds something to do.

He says, "A sack of flour costs 2,500 Afghanis in this city, but I don't even have ten Afghanis in my pocket.

If job opportunities are not created for the people here, they will be forced into theft and other crimes. I ask the officials to pay attention to our misery."

At the same time, several other young people from Uruzgan also voice concerns about the lack of job opportunities and call on the government to increase employment prospects.

Another young man from Uruzgan, named Qudratullah, says that even if he finds daily labor, the pay is so low that he doesn't know what to bring home.

"We are living in extreme poverty. Here, people can't even find work for fifty Afghanis a day.

They can't afford even a small bottle of cooking oil. No one has heard our voice," he says.

Some social activists in Uruzgan also express concern over the shortage of job opportunities in the province and call on the government to take meaningful steps to create employment in the region.

Ataullah Afghan, a resident and social activist in Uruzgan, says launching major development projects in the province could help reduce the unemployment rate.

He adds that due to the lack of work, many youths are now willing to risk their lives by illegally migrating to foreign countries, and some even lose their lives during the journey.

He states, "There's an economic crisis across the country because of droughts and lack of employment. There are no major projects. We urge the Islamic Emirate to seriously address this issue, prevent the physical and mental flight of young people, and create job opportunities for them."

On the other hand, local officials say they are making efforts to provide employment in various sectors for both educated and uneducated youth.

Raz Mohammad Zamir, deputy director of the Uruzgan Department of Information and Culture, says that educated youth will be recruited into available government positions and that technical and vocational training has been initiated for uneducated individuals.

He says, "Those youth who are educated are given a 90% share in every department. For the uneducated, the Department of Labor and Social Affairs has launched a six-month program with various technical trainings so that job opportunities can be created for the unemployed."

It is worth noting that, beyond Uruzgan, people across the country are complaining about unemployment, but the Islamic Emirate says it is striving to implement both large and small development projects within the country to create job opportunities for the people.

Ehsanullah Wolasmal

Afghanistan's unique weather diversity

While much of the world imagines Afghanistan as dry and dusty, the country's climate tells a far more vivid and varied story. Stretching across towering mountains, fertile valleys, and vast deserts, Afghanistan's 34 provinces experience remarkably different weather patterns throughout the year.

From the snow-covered peaks of Bamyan to the subtropical fields of Kunar and the sunbaked plains of Nimroz, Afghanistan's geography creates a patchwork of microclimates. These differences not only shape daily life but also influence agriculture, migration, and even local culture.

As summer reaches its peak, The Kabul Times takes a journey across provinces to capture the colorful weather diversity that defines this resilient land.

Located in central Afghanistan at an altitude of over 2,500 meters, Bamyan is known for its icy winters and cool summers. Even in July, temperatures rarely exceed 26°C during the day, while nights remain refreshingly cold.

Locals report frost as early as late September, with snow often blanketing the valleys well into April.

"We still wear jackets at night in summer," says 24-year-old Zahra, a shopkeeper in Bamyan city. "It's good for potatoes and wheat, but we always keep warm clothes nearby."

Bamyan's mild summer has become a small draw for domestic travelers seeking to escape the heat of the lowlands.

In contrast, eastern provinces like Nangarhar and Kunar enjoy warmer, semi-tropical weather. Daytime highs in July and August often reach 38°C, with humidity carried by eastern winds from Pakistan and India's monsoon systems.

These provinces receive more rainfall than the rest of the country, supporting rich green landscapes and abundant fruit orchards.

"This is mango and guava season in Jalalabad," says a roadside vendor near the Surkhrod district. "The weather helps everything grow fast here — it's like a different country compared to Kabul."

Though summers are hot, winters are mild and short, making Nangarhar one of the few regions where citrus fruits thrive naturally.

Move southwest to Nimroz, Helmand, and parts of Farah, and you'll find yourself in Afghanistan's driest and hottest areas. Temperatures in Zaranj, Nimroz's capital, can soar beyond 44°C during July, with humidity close to zero and hot winds sweeping across the dusty plains.

Rainfall here is rare, and sandstorms are common between June and August.

"Everything dries up if we don't water constantly," says Gul Ahmad, a farmer from Delaram. "We depend heavily on Helmand River for irrigation."

Despite the extreme climate, solar energy and desert agriculture projects are slowly expanding in these areas, using drip irrigation to reduce water waste.

In the northeast, the lush, mountainous regions of Nuristan and Badakhshan boast a cooler, wetter climate. Surrounded by the Hindu Kush mountains, these provinces receive significant snowfall in winter and regular rainfall during summer.

July temperatures average around 22–26°C, and rivers and waterfalls swell with glacial runoff.

"Everywhere is green now," says Akbar, a schoolteacher in Faizabad. "The rain helps our walnut and mulberry trees thrive. But landslides can be a problem after heavy storms."

Badakhshan, with elevations up to 7,000 meters, also experiences alpine climates at higher altitudes — some areas remain snow-covered year-round. See P4

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SPORTS

Afghanistan to compete in Central Asian Football Championship

The Afghanistan national football team is set to participate in the upcoming Central Asian Football Association (CAFA) Championship, where it will face strong competition from Tajikistan, Iran, and Malaysia. The tournament will bring together eight national teams and is scheduled to kick off on August 9, 2025. This year's edition of the championship will be hosted jointly by Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, marking a significant regional collaboration in promoting football across Central Asia. According to the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF), the Afghan team will play its group stage matches in Tajikistan.

The tournament provides a valuable platform for the Afghan squad to test its abilities against some of Asia's more established teams. Iran, known for its strong football legacy, will be a particularly challenging opponent, while matches against Malaysia and host country Tajikistan are also expected to be competitive.

The participation in this regional championship is seen as a crucial step for the Afghanistan national team in terms of gaining international exposure, strengthening team cohesion, and preparing for future continental and global qualifiers. Fans and analysts alike are hopeful that the team will deliver promising performances and build momentum for Afghan football at the international level.

The CAFA Championship continues to grow in prominence, and Afghanistan's presence in the tournament underlines the country's ongoing commitment to developing its national football program despite challenges. The AFF has expressed optimism and calls on fans to support the team during this important regional event.

The Kabul Times

Shubman Gill scores twin centuries in first Test as captain

India's new Test cricket captain, Shubman Gill, made an extraordinary start to his leadership career by scoring twin centuries against England in his first assignment as skipper. The young and talented batter demonstrated class and composure, leading his team from the front in both innings of the series opener.

In the first Test match, Gill played a commanding innings, scoring 147 runs to lay a solid foundation for India's batting lineup. He followed this remarkable performance with another unbeaten century in the second Test, scoring 114 not out. His consistency and calm under pressure have drawn praise from cricket fans and analysts alike, who view him as one of the future stars of Indian cricket.

The second Test match saw India post a strong total of 310 runs for the loss of five wickets in the first innings. Gill's unbeaten knock was central to India's innings, anchoring the batting effort and ensuring the team maintained control over the game. The remainder of the first innings is scheduled to continue on Thursday. Gill's twin centuries have not only highlighted his batting skills but also marked a successful beginning to his captaincy tenure. His ability to lead by example has boosted the confidence of the Indian team, which is looking to build a new era in Test cricket under his leadership.

Cricket experts have applauded Gill for rising to the occasion, emphasizing how his innings came at a critical moment when India needed a strong start to the series. With such a promising beginning, Shubman Gill's captaincy journey appears to be off to a dream start, and fans will be eager to see how he continues to guide the team in the matches ahead.

The Kabul Times

Ghazni hosts two-day boxing tournament

A provincial boxing tournament featuring 122 athletes has officially commenced in the city center of Ghazni. The competition is organized by the National Boxing Federation's provincial representative in collaboration with the Directorate of Physical Education and Sports of Ghazni province.

The tournament brings together athletes from various age and weight categories, including children (nunahelan), teenagers, youth, and adults. Competitors are set to face off in different matches over a two-day period, showcasing their skills, strength, and determination in the boxing ring.

The main objective of the event is to promote the sport of boxing among the youth and to foster a culture of physical activity and sportsmanship in the province. Organizers hope that through such events, young people will be encouraged to pursue boxing both recreationally and professionally.

The participation of over a hundred athletes highlights the growing popularity of boxing in Ghazni and reflects the local community's enthusiasm for competitive sports. Spectators are expected to attend the event in large numbers, adding to the excitement and atmosphere of the championship.

Local officials expressed appreciation for the efforts of the organizers and emphasized the importance of such initiatives in keeping the youth engaged in productive and healthy activities.

The tournament not only aims to identify emerging talent but also contributes to building discipline, confidence, and resilience among participants.

With strong support from local authorities and sports organizations, the boxing competition in Ghazni is set to become a recurring and anticipated event in the province's sporting calendar.

The Kabul Times

ECO summit sideline; Beradar meets Uzbek President

KABUL: Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund, the Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs of the Islamic Emirate, met with the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in the city of Khankendi, Azerbaijan, discussing political and economic, railway connectivity, trade, and transit relations, his office said in a statement the other day.

Beradar thanked the Republic of Uzbekistan for its positive and realistic stance on Afghanistan at the international level and expressed the desire for lasting good relations between the two neighboring countries, according to the statement.

The Deputy PM stated: "Currently, the trade volume between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan has surpassed one billion dollars, indicating a 60% increase compared to previous figures. We hope this volume will reach two billion dollars in the near future."

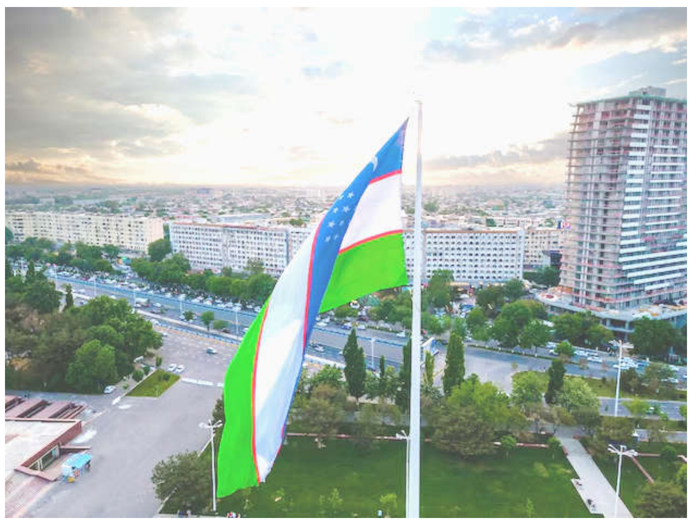
He called on the Uzbek side to facilitate the export of Afghan goods to Central Asia and Russia through Uzbekistan. "Both neighboring countries need to cooperate in ensuring economic stability, infrastructural development, and prosperity by initiating and managing projects related to mining, transport, transit, services, regional infrastructure, and foundational development," the statement quoted him as saying.

Meanwhile, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that with the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, Afghanistan has seen progress in various sectors.

He added that Uzbekistan has conveyed the true realities of Afghanistan on international platforms and is working to present these realities to the global community, especially the United Nations.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev also stated that his country is prepared to invest in various sectors in Afghanistan, including the Mazar-e-Sharif–Herat–Kandahar railway project, the establishment of textile factories, cement production, oil refinery construction, salt mining and processing, electronic governance, and other areas.

He further stated that Uzbekistan is ready to increase the amount of imported electricity to Afghanistan following the swift completion of the 500-kilovolt power transmission line project.



President Mirziyoyev added that he will issue special directives to facilitate the export of Afghan goods, particularly agricultural products, to Central Asia and Russia via Uzbekistan.

He also emphasized improving banking transactions between the two countries, issuance of visas for Afghan nationals, and facilitating the sale of Afghan goods at the Termez International Trade Center, along with its further development.

According to the statement, the two sides agreed to form a joint group led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Beradar Akhund on behalf of Afghanistan and by the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan on behalf of his country to assess the progress and implementation of the agreements through designated committees.

The Kabul Times

After backing Israel, Iran's self-styled crown prince loses support

Hours before a ceasefire took effect between Israel and Iran on June 24, the son of Iran's last shah, Reza Pahlavi, held a televised news conference in the French capital, Paris. Dressed in a grey suit and blue tie with his hair combed back, the 64-year-old exiled (and self-styled) crown prince of the monarchy that Iranians overthrew in 1979 urged the United States not to give Iran's government a "lifeline" by restarting diplomatic talks on its nuclear programme.

Pahlavi insisted that Iran's Islamic Republic was collapsing. "This is our Berlin Wall moment," he said, calling for ordinary Iranians to seize the opportunity afforded by Israel's war and take to the streets, and for defections from the military and security forces. But the mass protests Pahlavi encouraged never materialised.

Instead, many Iranians – including those opposed to the government – rallied around the flag in a moment of attack by a foreign force. It appears that Pahlavi, who said in his Paris speech that he was ready to replace Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and lead Iranians down a "road of peace and democratic transition", had misread the room.

While he was willing to align with Israel in achieving what he perceives to be the greater goal of overthrowing the Islamic Republic, the majority of his compatriots were not.

If anything, Pahlavi may have squandered the little support he once had by choosing not to condemn Israel's heavy bombardment of Iran, which killed more than 935 people, including many civilians, said Trita Parsi, an expert on Iran and the author of Treacherous Alliance: The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the United States.

"He has – in my estimation – destroyed much of the brand name [of the shah] … by going on TV and making excuses for Israel when it was targeting our apartment buildings and killing civilians," he told Al Jazeera. Still, what support he does have – particularly in the Iranian diaspora – often emanates from opposition to the Islamic Republic and nostalgia for the monarchy that predated it.

Yasmine*, a British-Iranian in her late 20s, said that members of her own family support Pahlavi for the symbolism of the pre-Islamic Republic era that he represents, as opposed to what he may actually stand for, adding that she believed that he lacked a clear political vision.

"He really symbolises what Iran was [a government that was secular and pro-West] prior to the Islamic Republic, and that's what those who are asking for Reza Pahlavi want back," she told Al Jazeera.

Her aunt, Yasna*, 64, left Iran just months before the 1979 revolution to attend university in the United Kingdom. While she supports Pahlavi for the reasons her niece mentioned, she also believes Iran will no longer be a pariah to the West if he returned to rule Iran.

"He's somebody from my generation, and I have a clear memory of growing up in the days under the shah … he's also so friendly with America, Europe and Israel, and we need somebody like that [in Iran]," Yasna said.

Aljazeera

From P3

Afghanistan's unique weather...

The capital Kabul enjoys a more balanced four-season climate. Summers are warm but rarely extreme — July temperatures hover around 30°C in the day and cool to 15–17°C at night. Winters can be harsh, with snow common from December to February.

Spring and autumn are the most pleasant seasons, attracting visitors from other provinces and even international aid workers and diplomats in past years.

However, Kabul's weather can be unpredictable. In recent years, unexpected April snow or intense dust storms in September have surprised residents.

Afghanistan's agriculture — which employs over 60% of the population — is deeply tied to weather patterns. Provinces like Herat, Balkh, and Kandahar rely on precise seasonal rains and temperatures for crops like wheat, pomegranates, and grapes.

In Herat, farmers anticipate hot but stable summers, while in Kandahar, the summer heat is essential for fruit ripening. Balkh enjoys moderate summer temperatures around 35°C and minimal humidity, ideal for grains and melons.

But increasingly erratic weather, linked to global climate shifts, poses a growing challenge. Delayed rains or shortened winters can disrupt crop cycles, prompting researchers and farmers to adapt with new farming methods.

Afghanistan's landscape may look uniform from afar, but those who live across its provinces know just how dramatically the weather shifts from one place to another. It is a country where someone may be harvesting mangoes in Jalalabad while another digs snow in Bamyan — all in the same week. This meteorological diversity adds depth to Afghanistan's national identity. It shapes daily routines, builds regional traditions, and shows the country's natural beauty beyond the usual narratives.

Sumita Balouch

From P3

Iran–Israel war: From...

The U.S. tried to prevent the full outbreak of war, as it is already entangled in the Ukraine conflict and is reluctant to open a new front. Russia, with its military presence in Syria, feared the loss of regional balance. China, which seeks stability for its economic projects in the region, was also alarmed by the rising tensions. These realities show that the Iran-Israel confrontation is no longer a bilateral issue—it has evolved into an international matter that could determine the fate of the entire region. The recent war has changed the dynamics in such a way that things will never be the same again. Both Iran and Israel have realized that direct confrontation is possible, but extremely costly. From now on, either the path of dialogue and tension management must be pursued, or the region must brace for a new wave of conflict—one that could be broader and more dangerous than before. **The End.**

FiroozAhmad Ebrahemi